



WASHINGTON COUNTY
COMMUNITY GUIDED PLANNING and
ZONING PROCESS

Planning Committee Meeting Minutes and
Follow Up "to dos"
February 25, 2016 5-7PM



Room 228 Torrey Hall, University of Maine at Machias

Attendees:

Judy East, Washington County Council of Governments
Sarah Strickland, Strategic Wisdom Partners
John Hough, Edmunds Twp
Karen Bolstridge, Land Use Planning Commission
Hugh Coxe, Land Use Planning Commission
Crystal Hitchings, Washington County Council of Governments, Downeast&Acadia Regional Tourism
David Bell, Cherryfield Foods, ME Wild Blueberries
Heron Weston, Interim Supervisor Washington County UT
John Bryant, American Forest Management
John Dudley, Town of Alexander
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Dwayne Shaw, Downeast Salmon Federation
Al May, Trescott Twp; Maine CDC
Travis Howard, land manager for Wagner Forestry
Tora Johnson, University of Maine GIS Service Center and Laboratory

Introductions, agenda review – no changes

Discuss survey input: Criteria for Choosing UTs/Plantations for conducting Prospective Zoning:

Judy introduced the discussion of criteria with the following 4 **Discussion Flow** slides:

From the Process Document our discussion is directed by the following:

3 Areas of Analysis

- Stormwater and regional hydrology, which with increasing frequency of extreme precipitation events have important effects on shellfish water quality, emergency management, fish passage, and hydroelectric management
- Natural resources development, including the "four Fs" --- fishing, forest, farming, and fun (outdoor recreation and tourism) – as well as energy sources such as wind, biomass, and tidal power.
- Economic development relative to commercial/industrial location decisions.

Our first task is to establish **Criteria to Narrow the scope of our work**

- Narrow scope 34 Uts & 3 Plantations to a manageable #
- Additional data is needed – it will be hard to get
- Will then perform analysis on – 5-10 (?) UTs/Plts

- First 5 to work on are pretty obvious
- Next 3-5 (?) less so – this decision will be the crux of the discussion on Feb 25

In choosing our criteria we need to decide:

- Which ones do we use – how will they be ranked?
 - Infrastructure
 - Services
 - Investment
- How will Population and (past) residential development affect our choices?
- For both general areas (Infr/Srvc/Investment and Pop/Devel), are there:
 - Other Criteria?
 - Cut-offs or thresholds to establish distance, amounts etc.?
- Things to “fix” – a somewhat separate criteria for selecting UTs/Plts to work in – this criteria responds to issues raised in the public meetings and during field visits with Karen Bolstridge (LUPC Permit Review staff) where specific situations or problems could be fixed as we take this closer look at Washington County

Finally – after we have narrowed our scope – we need to agree on the criteria to be used for each Suitability Analysis

- Development
 - Which ones? How ranked?
- Conservation
 - Recreation, Habitat, Commercial Resource Use
 - Which ones? How ranked?
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Discussion of Criteria to Narrow our Scope from 34 UTS & 3 Plantations used:

- Summary of Survey Responses (note this is now posted at <http://www.wccog.net/plan-outline-plan-documents.htm>)
- Spreadsheet of criteria (also now posted at <http://www.wccog.net/plan-outline-plan-documents.htm>)
- County wide map
- Population data
- Knowledge around the table

Planning Committee reviewed all of the above and discussed Judy’s preliminary analysis¹ that generated a sub-set of UTs/Plantations in which to conduct prospective zoning (6 definite, 5 possible ones) and concluded the following:

¹ Note to Planning Committee – recall that Heron and I refined the population figures (based on a calculated figure = # of homesteads * 2 persons/household); you saw the corrected #s in the spreadsheet but not in the WORD summary; here is how they are different:

- Baring year round population is 150 (not 253)
- Cathance year round population is 34 (not 52)
- Edmunds year round population is 162 (not 325)
- Marion year round population is 36 (still under 50 as in the original analysis)
- Trescott year round population is 212 (not 325)
- Grand Lake Stream year round population is 74 (not 109)

1. Likely agreement to conduct prospective zoning in: Baring, Cathance, Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, and Grand Lake Stream
2. Sort/analyze/screen the selection criteria relative to anticipated development types (commercial, recreation, residential) and then ask “do we still agree on the initial set of 6”? (*Judy to prepare this and get back to the Plg Committee by e-mail*)
3. Analyze data with respect to dynamic change whether growth or decline (*Judy to dig into population change, development data and whatever else may be available to prepare this analysis*)
4. Develop “opportunity criteria” that would support conducting prospective zoning even if some of the broader-scope criteria do not support doing so; egs from discussion:
 - a. Presence of regionally significant recreational assets
 - b. Border crossing investment
 - c. Railroad infrastructure investment
 - d. Proximity to significant road serving interior forestlands eg. Stud Mill Road
 - e. Proximity to significant energy infrastructure eg. Natural Gas Pipeline
 - f. Proximity to very large service center – eg 45 minutes to Bangor
 - g. Telecommunications infrastructure installation/investment
 - h. Assets provided in towns (or across the border) surrounding a particular UT/Plantation
5. Discussion of “opportunity criteria” in #4 and dynamic change in #3 informed the “possible” list that Judy prepared as follows:
 - a. Initial “possible” list included Brookton, Kossuth, Lambert Lake, Devereaux, and Twp 24
 - b. Stronger emphasis on Lambert Lake due to significant recreational assets (Spednic Lake, St Croix River), recent investment in border crossing facility (in Vanceboro), recent investment in rail siding
 - c. Retention of Brookton to assist with development in the face of recent decline.
 - d. Retention of Devereaux despite minimal year round population (2) but recognizing 45 minute proximity to Bangor.
 - e. Inclusion of Big Lake due to proximity to service center (Princeton) and its airport; recent perceived growth in structures (NOTE: it is only 3 between 2004-2015); terminus of Stud Mill Road, proximity to Natural Gas Pipeline
 - f. Inclusion of Forest City due to significant recreational assets (East Grand Lake, St Croix River); recent investment in border crossing facility; recent cell tower investment
 - g. Reduced priority for both Kossuth and Twp 24 given very limited population and minimal other criteria besides being bisected by SR 6 (Kossuth) and SR 9 (Twp24)
6. Recreation/Conservation Discussion
 - a. Can be weird bedfellows in a suitability analysis given that recreation in this region is not the “Water Park” variety but dependent on the vitality of our conserved lands;
 - b. Tora could run a third suitability analysis for recreation that recognizes the need for certain types of development that allows visitors to enjoy what we have
 - c. Speaking as a large landowner John B indicated that there are abundant recreation opportunities that are not used because we lack the infrastructure/facilities for users to stay here and enjoy the recreational assets
 - d. Hugh reminded us that we are taking on a very large task (with 13 potential UTs/Plantations to prospectively zone) and that factors are indeed different when

considering residential, commercial or recreational development. However the LUPC rules governing recreational lodging were revamped 3 years ago to make it easier to develop recreational lodging, i.e. without meeting the adjacency provisions that can make obtaining a zone change so difficult. This easier set of rules is not the same as establishing prospective zones that specifically allow recreational development but this may be an area where we do not need to focus as diligently on new/changed prospective zones.

- e. John and Travis reminded us that traditional use of large private landholdings is an extremely highly valued part of life in the UT (the public survey affirms this); and that recreation and subsistence hunting go hand in hand

Some additional insights from discussion around the table:

Karen asked - Are we including the aspirations of the large landowners?

Judy said the Planning Committee was selected to ensure they were included and we have good participation from John B, Travis H, David B. Dwayne S. – does this address Karen’s concern? Keep this in mind going forward.

Dwayne asked whether our choice of criteria could be turned the other way to see if certain UTs had especially significant conservation features – this could generate prospective zones that focus on conservation vs. development. Our task is primarily focused on prospective zoning for new development given that the default zone in much of the LUPC jurisdiction is General Management and the existence, already, of Protection zones on most conservation features. However, many of those Protection Zones are based on some extremely old information (some dating back to the 1970s). The conservation suitability analysis (based as it will be on much newer information than the information that created the original Protection Zones) could therefore inform us about those UTs or portions of UTs that have the most critical natural features. Tora indicated that both suitability analyses would be run countywide. This affirms again the link between recreation and conservation.

What do we need to know about unoccupied UTs that might not be obvious? These will be reviewed according to the “opportunity criteria” to make sure we are not missing some important assets in the area.

Betsy recalled us to the over-arching areas of analysis, particularly the stormwater/hydrology issues and urged us to remember that the vast majority of the population of Washington County is downstream of the areas we are discussing with respect to growth and development.

Our NEAR final list of 13 UTs/Plantations after this discussion includes:

First tier: Baring, Cathance, Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, and Grand Lake Stream

Second tier: Brookton, Lambert Lake, Devereaux, Big Lake, Forest City, Kossuth and Twp 24

We may do prospective zoning in entire UTs or in discrete areas; for the lowest priority (fewest compelling criteria) we may simply not get to them in the time/resources we have.

Judy will prepare the additional analyses in items 2 and 3 above and add it to the “opportunity criteria” started in #5 above – and then we can say we are good to go...hopefully by e-mail and before the next meeting!

Ran out of time to complete items 4-7 of the agenda.

Next steps on each:

Survey input on suitability analyses – Judy to review survey input with Tora and frame any additional input needed.

Issues Forum – like to be held in summer; plenty of time to plan; postponed until March meeting

Updates –

Plantations outreach underway:

- Letter (informing about Plg effort and invitation to go to survey) going out on March 1 to 377 households and property owners in Baring and Grand Lake Stream

Younger demographic outreach

- Letter to Edmunds School and Alexander (covering the majority of UT residents in school) went out 2-25-2016
- Crystal contacting 4 other schools to send the letter as well
- Facebook page up and running

Data issues

- Working with EMEC for 3 phase power coverage
- Some of the data issues discussed during the meeting – to be continued!

Chapter drafts – Judy has started; will share drafts as we proceed

Other Items – for next time:

Demo the_Map App: editable online tool to draw prospective zones on layers of mapped information (resources, suitability analyses, alternative base maps)

Next meeting – location change:

will be in the Assembly Room at Washington County Community College, March 28th 5-7PM

Prelim Agenda Items for next time:

- Issues Forum: scope, potential speakers, purpose, timing
- Final agreement on full set of Criteria for choosing which UTs to prospectively zone
- Final list of UTs to prospectively zone (note – we may get to these decisions by e-mail vote)
- Review Map app tool
- Report on data improvements/workarounds
- Full survey analysis – combining October outreach meetings, survey input from last fall, school and Plantation outreach

Thanks everyone – fantastic input – it is a pleasure to work with you all!!

Respectfully Submitted
Judy East